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ABSTRACT

The pros and cons of decentralization of decision-making authority to the school-site level as a public school management technique are intended to serve as an informational summary for the members of the California State Board of Education, and as a resource for school district governing boards and district administrators to use to determine the most appropriate level at which to place decision-making authority. Sections of the report discuss key considerations that must underlie any decision to move toward decentralization; individual rights and management decisions; and the legal aspects of decentralization. Comments about decentralization submitted by school business officials are summarized. The final section presents descriptions of site management implementation in four other states. Appendixes and a bibliography complete the report. (Author/HLP)

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Site Management

An Analysis of the Concepts and Fundamental Operational Components Associated with the Delegation of Decision-Making Authority and Control of Resources to the School-Site Level in the California Public School System

Prepared for the
California State Board of Education
by the
Educational Management and Evaluation Commission

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Preface

During the last six months of 1976 and the early part of 1977, the Educational Management and Evaluation Commission, an advisory body to the California State Board of Education, solicited and received oral and written testimony regarding the pros and cons of "decentralization of decision-making authority to the school-site level" as a public school management technique. Personnel from several California education associations and from a number of school districts provided the majority of the input.

The Educational Management and Evaluation Commission's Ad Hoc Committee on Site Management was charged with the responsibilities of (1) conducting an in-depth study of the status and ramifications of site management; and (2) preparing a report for consideration by the full commission and, upon approval by that body, the State Board of Education.

The composition of the Ad Hoc Committee on Site Management was as follows:

Owen Griffith (Chairperson)

Consultant

Northrop Corporation

Torrance

Berwyn Fragner

Vice-President/Director of Industrial Relations

TRW Systems, Inc.

Redondo Beach

Robert L. Joss

Director of Personnel

Wells Fargo, Bank, N.A.

San Francisco

J. Russell Kent

San Mateo County Superintendent of Schools

Redwood City

John C. Reinking

Superintendent

Roseville City Elementary School District

Roseville

California State Department of Education staff members who assisted in the preparation of this document were William D. Whiteneck, Deputy Superintendent for Administration; Jack Liebermann, Chief, Bureau of Management Services; and Meryll Powell, Coordinator, School District Management Assistance Team. Erwin A. Decker, former Assistant to the Deputy Superintendent for Administration, wrote the report.

This report is intended to serve two purposes and is directed toward two audiences. First, it is intended to serve as an informational summary for the members of the State Board of Education. Second, it is intended to serve as a resource for school district governing boards, district administrators, and other education practitioners to use to determine the most appropriate level at which to place decision-making authority. The report is not intended as a textbook on management techniques but is intentionally limited to a compendium of thoughts and ideas related to site management as a form of decentralized decision making in public school administration.

The concept of school-site management as a form of decentralized decision making has both proponents and opponents. This document offers a summary of the views of both groups.

The Educational Management and Evaluation Commission does not advocate either a decentralized system of school management or a centralized management system or vice versa. On the issue of centralization versus decentralization, the Commission would concur with the viewpoint stated by Samuel L. Barrett, Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education and State Director of Vocational Education, California State Department of Education, in his testimony before the Ad Hoc Committee on Site Management:

"It seems to me the question should not be centralization versus decentralization, but instead, what is the proper balance of the two. How can the output of the organization be maximized in an efficient manner by a proper balance of each structure? The problem, of course, is that there are no two organizations or school districts exactly alike. While we can make general statements that may apply in a majority of situations, there will always be exceptions—nothing is absolute."

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MABEL PURL
Chairperson
Educational Management and
Evaluation Commission

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Preface	iii
I. Rationale for the Report	1
II. What Is Site Management?	3
Definitions	3
Relationship of Centralization and Decentralization	4
III. Factors for Consideration	6
IV. Reactions to Site Management Application	11
School Budget	11
Personnel and Employee Relations	11
Accounting	12
School Finance	13
Transportation	13
Risk Management	14
Building	14
Purchasing	15
V. Potential Obstacles and Legal Considerations	16
The Transition from Concept to Implementation	16
Decentralization by Proclamation	16
Areas of High Specialization and High Risk	16
Individual Rights and Management Decisions	16
Legal Aspects	16
VI. Pros, Cons, and Constraints	18
VII. Examples of Site Management Implementation Outside California	21
Louisville, Kentucky	21
Florida	21
New York City	22
Tacoma, Washington	22
Appendix A. Example of District Goals	23
Appendix B. Decentralized or Partially Decentralized Districts	24
Appendix C. Practitioners Who Participated in the Study	27
Appendix D. Selected Bibliography	29

I. Rationale for the Report

Traditionally, the school district has been the primary decision-making unit in the operation of the public school system. Proponents of increased decision-making authority at the school-site level argue, however, that the important contact between the educator and the client takes place at the school level rather than at the district level. They also argue that the classroom is too small a unit and the district too large a unit for effective decision making. Thus, they believe that the school is the most reasonable unit in which to place primary managerial responsibilities and functions.

The basic concept of site management generally embraces the following principles: (1) funds are allocated to schools on the basis of the needs of the children in the schools; (2) the specific educational objectives of a school are set by people associated with the school; (3) decisions about how funds are to be spent for instruction are made at the school; (4) the organization of instruction is determined at the school level; and (5) parents participate in school decision making.

The implementation of projects funded under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the provisions of California's Early Childhood Education (ECE) Act have led school district governing boards to provide school-site managers with increased discretionary powers. Other programs, such as educationally disadvantaged youth (EDY) programs, and efforts directed toward reform in intermediate and secondary education have resulted in school-site managers being given more autonomy and control than they had previously. Thus, the concept of school-site management is currently being implemented to a degree.

Several well-documented studies have been made of management in the field of education. For the most part these studies were designed to assess how the structure for decision making (*who makes what decisions*) affects and is affected by various forces in society. Several societal, legislative, and judicial changes over the past decade impinge upon traditional management concepts. These changes have resulted in the following:

- A more diverse student population that demands that schools meet their individual educational needs

- Increased teacher involvement in the management process
- Increased involvement of the federal administration and judiciary
- A general increase in the antibureaucratic attitude
- Increases in urban reform efforts, both in number and scope
- Budget tightening and cost increases that have necessitated changes in management techniques
- Increased state involvement in school finance as a result of school finance reform

Governor Brown has indicated a strong interest in placing more decision-making authority at the school-site level. One of his educational advisers stated recently that "he [Governor Brown] is doubtful that real reform can be achieved without transferring more decision-making authority from the district level to individual schools."

Several members of the California State Board of Education have expressed keen interest in decentralized school management. Board member Michael W. Kirst has stated, "I would certainly favor more attention and flexibility to the school site and give people more choice." Former Board member John Pincus indicated that his major interests include getting "the educational system to provide people with greater choice while... providing a high level of basic skills." Dr. Pincus believes that "teachers and other (staff) people... are not systematically brought into the planning process," and he favors "some moves toward decentralization of decision making."

Many education practitioners have proposed modifications to existing management programs in an effort to improve the quality of decisions and the working environment. Many of the proposed modifications are based upon the proposition that both the problems and the decision-making authority should be brought closer to the people. Richard H. Van Deren, former Superintendent of Soquel Union Elementary School District, had the following to say about this philosophy:

A prime requirement for school districts is the creation and implementation of a learning management system that facilitates responsible instructional innovations and efficient allocation of resources that will

result in measurable improvement of learning. What is needed is a total school district learning management plan that places instructional decision making as close to the learner as possible, and encourages two-way initiating action. This learner-oriented management process best begins with measurable identification of learner needs as related to societal requirements, both present and future.

It is with this learner-orientation in mind that a comprehensive plan for decentralized school district learning management has been developed. Its development was guided by the following broad philosophical concepts:

- Top priority should be given to the needs of the learner rather than to interests of the teacher or administrator.
- For the individual to be creative, he or she must have freedom and authority to make decisions.
- With freedom goes responsibility and with responsibility goes accountability.
- Freedom to make decisions is kept within the broad policies of the Board of Trustees.
- Decentralization achieves relevant and measurably greater creativity than centralized decision making.

Need for Continuous Planning for Change and Improvements: The school is part of a larger ever-changing world and the changes affect each person within a school district. Needs are changing; values are changing; and technology is changing. Provision must be made for a system of planned renewal.

Have Confidence in Others to Make Decisions: Decentralization requires that confidence be placed in individuals to make decisions. A basic assumption is that educators are competent and that they are knowledgeable and have the necessary problem-identification and problem-solving skills.

Tolerance for Diversity: Decentralized decision making in a school district requires that all segments of a school community develop a tolerance and enthusiasm for diversity, whether they be members of the board of trustees, superintendent, principals, teachers, or citizens in the community. The district should have agreed-upon, common basic goals and objectives.

Respect for the Competence of Teachers: When the competencies of teachers are assumed, the role of the teacher in the processes of inservice growth is altered. The focus is no longer on finding ways to "improve" the teacher, but rather upon reducing the learning problems of students. Thus, when a specific learning problem has been identified, the principal and the teacher or teachers concerned must work together as colleagues to resolve the problem.

Partners on the Educational Team, the Teacher: The implementation of a system of management by objectives—a system that focuses on results rather than methodology—places the teacher in a true participating

partnership with the principal, superintendent, parents, and learner. This recognition of the teachers' professional expertise is part of a general recognition of their growing and increasing professional competencies and capabilities. The teacher is a full partner on a team of professional educators.

Partners on the Educational Team, the Learner: The schools are for learners. If the learner does not agree with the objectives, either through faith or understanding, the educational results will suffer. Therefore, the learner must be included in educational planning.

Partners on the Educational Team, the Administrator: In a system of management by objectives, the administrator plays a vital support role by assisting teachers in achieving relevant goals for learners. The administrator serves as a catalyst for change, fulfills a monitoring function, and serves as a resource person to the teacher.

Partners on the Educational Team, Parents and Other Members of the Community: Parents and other members of the community need to be involved in developing learning goals. They need to participate in the development of the plans for achieving these goals and in the development of a method for determining whether or not the goals have, in fact, been achieved.¹

Van Deren is an advocate of participative management, a system that, when applied in its purest form to public school administration, involves representation of all segments of the district and school populations in planning and management. Such participation may be an integral part of either a highly centralized or decentralized management system. To determine whether a management system is basically a centralized or decentralized system, one need only ask, "Where does the decision-making authority lie?"

A primary rationale for the development of this report was that school district governing boards have an obligation to review periodically the effectiveness of the district's management system and, where appropriate, to adopt those procedures that will ensure the best educational programs possible for children. Societal and other pressures dictate such review. Declining enrollments, funding limitations, affirmative action policies, pupil integration, collective bargaining, legislation, judicial decisions, and the existence of improved management technology are only examples of pressures that require continuing review of management processes.

¹A Plan for Effective Learning Management. Capitola, Calif.: Soquel Union Elementary School District, 1971.

II. What Is Site Management?

This section contains definitions of decentralization, site management, and participatory management and a discussion of the relationship between the three.

Definitions

A variety of views exists as to the definitions of decentralization, site management, and participatory management and the relationship between the three concepts. Some people, for example, equate site management with participatory management. The opinion of the Educational Management and Evaluation Commission is that participatory management can be a factor in any management system and that its existence does not, in itself, denote decentralization. A more realistic way of determining whether or not a management system is a decentralized system is to identify the level at which decisions are made.

Decentralization is generally defined as the systematic delegation of decision-making authority from a center, or central office, to subunits. The central office allocates the resources to the subunits, and the subunits are accountable to the central office for the use of those resources. This report on site management as a form of decentralization is concerned with decisions regarding the use of resources at local school sites and generally deals with *implementation* of policy rather than formulation of policy.

For purposes of this report, the term *management* is defined as the "performance of the essential management functions: planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling." The term *decentralization* is defined as the "movement of management decision-making authority in the areas of essential management functions, from the central office toward the site manager, as they relate to operations at the individual school site."

The commission received other, and equally valid, definitions of decentralization from various individuals and organizations. The California Association of School Business Officials, for example, defines decentralization as a "systematic and consistent delegation of authority and decision making to the local school level." In the Fremont Union High School District, decentralization is defined as the "distribution of decision making—

the allocation of authority and responsibility to individuals near the point of implementation."

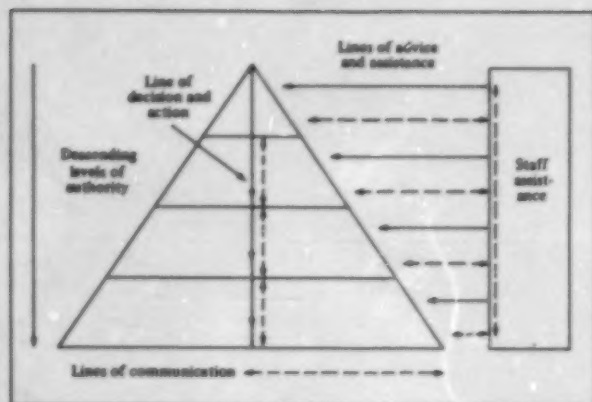
Some advocates of site management support a system of *statewide* examinations to assess pupil achievement in at least reading and mathematics. A basic ingredient of their plan would be an annual performance report prepared at the school site. Basically, the report would be intended to meet local clients' interests and would become the primary printed instrument by which clients could assess the effectiveness of their local schools. The report would include (1) information on staff, student achievement, areas of school strength, and areas for improvement; and (2) an assessment of school performance by parents, teachers, and students.

Parent advisory councils could be established and used to advise in the selection of the school principal and to advise him or her on all matters related to school operations. The principal would be the chief budget officer for his or her school. With the possible exception of categorical funds, monies would be distributed in a lump sum by the district. Thereafter, each principal and his or her advisers would determine, within state and district guidelines, how the funds are to be allocated.

The adoption of the type of plan described above should be based upon an evidenced need for decentralization of managerial authority. Competent principals, well versed in school business procedures, would be essential to the success of such a plan.

The traditional school organization, and that which is still prevalent, is the centralized structure, in which the source of most administrative decisions and actions is the central office. This type of organization is also referred to as the pyramid, or line and staff, management system. (See Fig. 1.) Decisions are made at the top and implemented down through the chain of command. Even when those at the top seek consultation with and advice from those below, communication follows a top-to-bottom pattern (central office to school unit).

The centralized structure is commonly shown on organization charts with a multitude of layers of personnel. (See Fig. 2.) Usually, the larger the institution, the greater the numbers of layers in the hierarchy.



Source: Thayer, Arthur N., and Edward W. Beaubier. *Participative Management and Decentralized Decision Making Working Models*. Burlingame, Calif.: Association of California School Administrators, 1975, p. 21.

Fig. 1. Pyramidal model of organizational structure



Source: Thayer, Arthur N., and Edward W. Beaubier. *Participative Management and Decentralized Decision Making Working Models*. Burlingame, Calif.: Association of California School Administrators, 1975, p. 21.

Fig. 2. Organizational structure for a centralized management system

In a system of site management, resources (staff, monies, and so forth) are allocated by the central office to the school site. (See Fig. 3.) The use of and accountability for those resources are the responsibilities of the school-site manager. (See Fig. 4.)

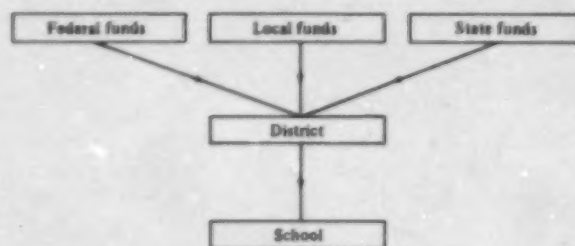


Fig. 3. Resource allocation pattern in a site management system

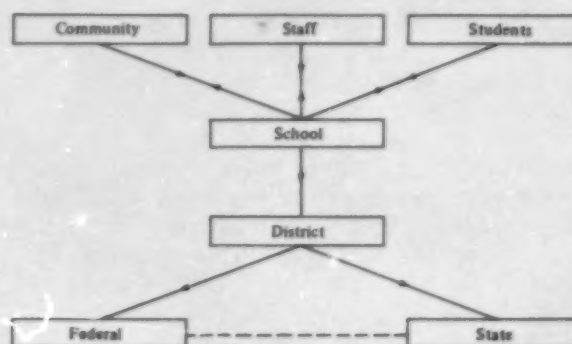


Fig. 4. Resource utilization and accountability pattern in a site management system

Relationship of Centralization and Decentralization

Much of the testimony and literature gathered by the Educational Management and Evaluation Commission indicated that an effective management system may be centralized in some aspects and decentralized in others:

As contrary as it may seem, it is absolutely essential to centralize some aspects of a district's operations for successful decentralization of the operating unit. The most important aspect is to centralize the major goals, objectives, criteria, and criterion measures used to assess the outcome. This also necessitates a strong information

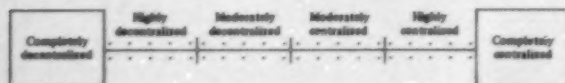
system that can keep board and central office staff adequately informed to complete their responsibilities. Only with a strong information, reporting and assessment system can a large school district successfully plan, implement and maintain a decentralized system of responsibility and accountability.

There are many facets to Decentralization-Centralization management concepts... successful decentralization of authority should be carefully determined and then supported with appropriate accountability information and support systems. Decentralization cannot be expected to work by stating, "Let's stand by and see if it will work," but rather it must be carefully planned to work.¹

In a paper prepared for the Ad Hoc Committee on Site Management, Rex C. Fortune, Associate Superintendent for Secondary Education Programs, California State Department of Education, stated the following in regard to assumptions about decentralization:

One assumption is that decentralization and centralization can coexist in the same system. If the system is a school district, for example, there can be centralized services, such as data processing, accounting, evaluation, transportation, districtwide needs assessment, and district-level budgeting. At the same time there can be decentralized school-level program planning; program development; locally determined staffing patterns; organization of the school site; and, to some extent, school-level budgeting within the parameters of the overall district budget. A point of fact is that there is evidence that much of this occurs in the state, especially in those districts and schools that have categorical programs.

The second assumption is that the meanings of decentralization and centralization can vary, as the illustration below would indicate.



Further, there can be variation in the level of decentralization. For example, consider the following situations. (1) The manager has complete authority to decide or act within limits of board policy, rules and regulations, law, social mores, and conscience. (2) The manager has complete authority to decide or act but must inform someone of the action. (3) The manager has the authority to act with prior approval from someone. (4) The manager may be consulted, but decisions and directions come from someone else. (5) The manager seldom, if ever, participates in decision making. Obviously

¹Thayer, Arthur N., and Edward W. Beaubier. *Participative Management and Decentralized Decision Making Working Models*. Burlingame, Calif.: Association of California School Administrators, 1975, p. 20.

ously these range from the most decentralized to the least decentralized levels of authority. The general point is that the real significance and meaning of decentralization may vary even among those systems that are labeled "decentralized."

The third assumption is a product of the second. Decentralization is probably a neutral concept; that is, it is neither inherently good nor inherently evil. It has the potential for greatly increasing the relevance of the educational program. It does have a certain intrinsic appeal to Americans because in a democratic society there is a widely held belief that the decentralization of authority for decision making concerning the education of the young should be placed as close to the people as possible. Given this premise, one could argue that the school seems the lowest appropriate level at which decisions should be centralized. And if each school has an advisory council comprised of parents and others to provide input for decisions, so much the better for representative democracy.

In discussing the application of decentralized management concepts in secondary schools, Dr. Fortune offered the following:

My comments in this area will be limited to observations regarding the districts and schools that receive federal or state funds for one or more categorical programs. The simple fact is that in more than 300 junior and senior high schools that receive categorical funds for programs, there is a measure of decentralization in the operation of those programs. Specifically, there is school-level planning; school-level program development; school-level involvement of community, parents, and teachers in the planning; school-level program implementation and assessment; and school-level budgeting within the overall budget provided by the district and the state.

As one of our earlier assumptions indicates, this level of decentralization of programs and instruction coexists with centralized district-level and state-level policy development and program services. The districts conduct staff development, evaluation, and fiscal accounting activities and develop policies. The state conducts centralized monitor and review of the program—with instruments that are designed and applied statewide. In a few instances there are even national spot checks or program audits. While the key feature of the program is a school level decentralized program plan that is developed by people in the school, there are traces of centralized influence emanating from the district, from the state, and, to a lesser extent, from the federal government.

My conclusion would reaffirm the assumptions identified earlier, and I would take a positive position on the need for some degree of decentralized decision making and program operation at the school level. Experience and current thought point toward that direction. Even so, total decentralization of all educational functions is not likely to occur.

III. Factors for Consideration

The establishment of a management system that provides for decentralized budgeting and operations can be successful only if the community, school district governing board, administration, instructional personnel, and classified staff are committed to such a system. The establishment of community committees at the school and district levels, particularly in the area of budget development, may be desirable.

The concept of site management is based upon the philosophy that site management is the process that permits on-site administrators to become educational leaders through increased responsibility for the total school operation. This basic leadership role is enhanced if the decision-making authority and accountability for decisions are vested in the on-site administrator and if he or she has a major role in financial control, curriculum development, and staff selection.

Several key considerations must underlie any decision to move toward decentralization. These considerations include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The relationship between decision-making authority, resources control, and accountability—Decision-making authority, control over resources, and accountability for performance must be commensurate and must bear equal relationship to each other. In actuality, an interrelationship exists between decision making, allocation of resources, and accountability; the degree of each and the responsibility for each must be thoroughly understood by all central office staff and school staff members.
- The placement of decision-making authority, control of resources, and accountability—Decision-making authority, control of resources, and accountability should be placed as close as possible to the learner without any sacrifice of efficiency. The system that is used should be the one that will produce the most efficient performance overall, with the emphasis on cost effectiveness.
- The need for uniformity and diversity—Provisions must be made to meet the need for both uniformity throughout the district and diversity at the school site. The uniform and

equitable treatment of all staff and students is a prime consideration at the district level. Uniform procedures for such functions as attendance accounting and ordering of supplies are encouraged, and consistency in following uniform standards should be regularly evaluated. Diversity might exist in such areas as course offerings, class size, student groupings, extent of staff and student involvement, and decision-making techniques. There should be uniformity in some areas and diversity in others.

- District population growth or decline—Receptivity to change and the probability for successful implementation of a new concept are greater in an organization that is growing than they are in one that is contracting. In a school district declining enrollment is usually synonymous with decreasing income. Therefore, districts with declining enrollment may not have significant amounts of money available for allocation to school sites.
- District size and configuration and the accessibility of school sites—Obviously, a district with only one school is already decentralized. Large districts that are considering decentralization may wish to establish zones or areas as subunits; medium-size and small districts may desire to allocate decision-making authority directly to the site level.
- The demographic characteristics of the community—The stability, density, and distribution of the population within a district and the homogeneous or heterogeneous makeup of that population may influence a decision to implement site management concepts. The factors for consideration may include education levels, economic status, and ethnic background.
- Community philosophy, traditions, understanding, and acceptance of change—The liberal or conservative nature of the community and its history as to degree of interest and involvement in school affairs are prime concerns when any change is contemplated. The existence of an active minority or majority opposed to change would certainly constitute an obstacle to the implementation of site

management concepts. As a generalization, the more liberal a community's viewpoint, the more potential exists for acceptance of change.

- The governing board's attitude—The liberal or conservative nature of the governing board membership will have an impact on a proposed move toward decentralization. This impact should be at least equal to that of the community. In addition, the question of whether or not the board is willing to delegate decision-making authority below the district level must be considered.
- The potential impact on educational programs and processes—A primary question to be answered in the planning phase is whether or not decentralization will enable the district to provide improved educational programs. A negative response establishes a good reason for discontinuing a move in that direction. If the response is positive, a study should be made to determine the benefits to be gained.
- The willingness of managers to accept and relinquish authority
- The existence of clearly stated goals, objectives, and plans for the district and school sites—District goals, adopted by the governing board, establish guidelines for the development of site management operational plans and instructional goals and objectives. Such plans and instructional goals and objectives should consistently reflect efforts to achieve district goals. (See Appendix A for an example of district goals.)
- The need for commitment and trust—A climate of commitment and trust is basic in any management system. Such a climate is particularly critical during the implementation of a site management system. For the system to be successful, commitment and trust must exist reciprocally between the governing board, district office, principal, school staff, parents, and students.

To help ensure a successful site management program, the district must commit adequate time, money, and energy. It is not unreasonable to assume that additional complexities will be inherent in any form of decentralization, particularly in the implementation phase. These complexities could include increased time from and effort by personnel; the probability of higher costs (with possible increases in effectiveness and

efficiency); and increased coordination, controls, and reporting. An effective communication system, extending laterally and vertically, is of the utmost importance. These complexities will increase the requirements for careful and extended planning and careful implementation.

As people assume new roles in the decision-making process, they will make mistakes. There must be sufficient commitment not to overreact. For example, if a person at the site level exceeds his or her authority in making a purchase, the purchasing authority of *all* people at the site level should not be terminated.

Site managers can be expected to take risks, which may result in mistakes. Therefore, some tolerance for error must be allowed, particularly during the implementation phase. Management must be prepared to deal with misinterpretations and errors in the implementation of a decentralization plan.

The broader the application of decentralization concepts, or the greater the authority at the site level, the more potential will exist for diversified educational programs at the school site. This diversification could lead to ambiguities that management must resolve.

- Staff competence to make decisions, perform, and evaluate—The training, experience, and other qualifications of personnel should indicate the degree and intensity of inservice training that will be needed to ensure competency at the district and site levels.

Staff development time should first be devoted to work on decision making. Who should make which kinds of decisions? To define, delineate, and clarify which decisions are to be made at the central office, which are to be made at the school site, and which are to be shared is of extreme importance. *Individual* responsibility for decision making should also be made clear. Each person must know what is expected of him or her so that he or she may know what to expect from others. The placement of decision-making authority requires time, patience, and practice and is subject to continuing reevaluation and change.

Once responsibilities are determined, a strong inservice training program should be undertaken to ensure that site managers and others involved in decision making acquire the

skills necessary to make workable decisions and to perform effectively and efficiently in their areas of responsibility. Intensive training may be needed in the areas of budgeting, accounting, and personnel management.

In the evaluation of a site management program, the emphasis should be on specifics, such as individual performance and time-oriented objectives, rather than on broad goals. A district should describe in detail how it is going to determine whether or not objectives were attained or the extent to which they were or were not attained. Because of unexpected variables, allowances should also be made for outcomes other than those specified. In addition to assessing specific outcomes, the evaluation should determine *what* happened and the *acceptability* of what happened. A good evaluation program is characterized by the following:

1. **Comprehensiveness:** All site-level objectives should be addressed in the evaluation procedure, and their relationship to broad district goals should be established.
2. **A positive posture:** Too often evaluation systems are looked upon as devices for determining who is not doing well. An evaluation system should be designed primarily to discover what and how improvements might be made through the application of assessment standards. The focus of a good evaluation system is on program objectives and individual performance.
3. **Attention to usefulness:** For every item of information that is to be collected, a designation should be made regarding who will use the information and for what purpose.
4. **Simplicity and clarity of reporting:** All essential information should be translated into lay language and included in all reports to students and the public. The public must have a thorough understanding of how progress toward goals is being measured. If the public does not have such understanding, citizen participation in school-community decisions will fall short of its potential for improving educational programs.
5. **Feedback:** If evaluation is to result in improvements, the system must include clearly stated feedback procedures. Those evaluated must have an opportunity to

reply to the evaluator and to establish a program to effect the desired improvements. The program manager must be cognizant of the areas in which time-oriented objectives were not reached and must have an opportunity to adjust procedures to meet existing standards.

The chart on page 10 illustrates decision-making levels utilized in the Mt. Diablo Unified School District. The example is limited to two areas, "Students" and "Curriculum." Obviously, many other areas could be treated in a similar manner.

- **The potential of community advisory groups—**One way to increase citizen participation is to form advisory councils or committees at each school and at the district level. Advisory councils provide an opportunity for meaningful community participation through school personnel and citizens working together.

A school advisory council is called upon to advise *only*. It advises the principal and the district on certain school matters and generally acts as a liaison between the school and the community.

Ideally, a school advisory council is composed of equal numbers of parents, students, other community members, and school staff. In elementary (kindergarten through grade six) schools, parents would take the place of student members, thereby providing those councils with a makeup of one-half parents, one-fourth other community members, and one-fourth school staff. Procedures must be developed to ensure effective representation of divergent points of view on the council. Election and selection by lot are the most democratic methods.

Generally, the tasks of an advisory council are to help (1) articulate the needs of the community; (2) determine goals; (3) establish programs; and (4) develop an evaluation design. The advisory council can provide such help by doing the following:

1. Serving as a committee in the goal-setting process
2. Overseeing a periodic review of school needs
3. Recommending an evaluation design for the school
4. Reviewing progress toward the school's goals

5. Facilitating communication between the school and the community
 6. Providing a forum for discussion of important issues related to goals and evaluation
 7. Providing necessary information to advisory committees for categorical aid programs
- The need for a comprehensive management information system—Managers at the district and site levels must have adequate information to make effective decisions. Such information must be provided by a strong management information system that can do the following:
 1. Provide district office personnel with information that permits them to review the performance effectiveness of site managers.
 2. Provide site managers with information about finances, policy changes, rules and regulations, current and proposed laws, student attendance, population trends, achievement trends, and the like.
 3. Provide information that is timely, accurate, and understandable. A system that provides information in any other form is of little value.
 4. Provide for efficient and accurate data gathering at the site level; uniform transmission of data to the central office; timely compilation of required reports at the central office; and transmission of completed reports to county, state, federal, and other agencies.
 - The need for appropriate interface and coordination between the various levels of management and staff—There is always a need for coordination and interface between site managers and central office managers. As the number of sites participating in a decentralized program increases and as the diversity in programs becomes more apparent, the need for a firm coordination and interface plan also increases.

Coordination and interface should extend to students, staff, and community advisory groups. Involving large numbers of people should bring about increased support for agreed-upon change and increased capacity for successful implementation of change.

The typical application of site management concepts involves the allocation of funds from the district office to the school site on the basis of some sort of unit of measurement. One such unit is

the "educational equivalent" (EE), which can be defined as a given amount of money per a given number of students (or average daily attendance). One EE, for example, could be \$14,500 for each 25 students. Suppose that a high school is expected to carry out all of its basic educational functions with an allocation of 125.4 EEs. The total amount must cover all activities related to at least the following:

- Instruction
- Guidance and counseling
- Field trips
- The registrar
- Attendance
- Accounting
- Special custodial coverage
- Health services
- Work experience
- Department chairpersons
- The student body
- Film rentals and other media needs
- Grade reporting
- Public relations

The costs for the principal would not be included in the 125.4 EEs. Special allotments would be provided for the following:

- Special education
- Remedial physical education
- Custodial and maintenance aid
- Compliance with state requirements
- Gifted education
- Vocational education
- Special government-funded projects

Suppose that for an elementary school, the formula is one EE for every 23 students. An elementary school with an enrollment (or a.d.a.) of 560 would receive 24.3 EEs ($560 \div 23 = 24.3$).

The elementary school, like the high school just described, would receive additional monies for a principal. Within its allocation the elementary school would have to cover the costs of the following:

- Instruction, including physical education and music education
- Guidance and counseling
- Attendance
- Special custodial coverage
- Grade reporting
- Field trips
- Accounting
- Health services
- Public relations

Example

Shared-Decision Matrix

	DECENTRALIZED School-Level Decision	Shared Decision	CENTRALIZED Superintendent-Board Decision
Students	1.0 Manage student behavior problems. Initiate inter-school discipline transfer. 2.0 Approve student field trips within the County. 3.0 Initiate specialized testing program. 4.0 Appearance of dress and hair. 5.0 Extra-curricular activities.	1.1 Receiving school concurs with discipline transfer. 2.1 Approve student field trips beyond County. 3.1 Discuss group testing program. 4.1 Discuss articulation among schools. 5.1 Athletic and band activities out of County.	1.2 Expels students. Determines inter-district transfers. 2.2 Adopts a field trip policy. 3.2 Adopts a testing program policy. 4.2 Adopts a student appearance policy. 5.2 Home solicitation—fund raising.
Curriculum	1.0 Develop and implement school's educational plan (i.e., ECE, RISE, Academics-plus Open Education). 2.0 Institute new/different instructional methods (i.e., Year-Round Schools). 3.0 Design, modify, implement courses. Select textbooks. 4.0 Utilize supplementary services.	1.1 Select pilot schools. Design educational plan format. 2.1 Monitor success of new methods. Determine pilot schools for new methods. 3.1 Provide curriculum articulation among schools and grade levels. 4.1 Determine type and minimal standards for supplementary services.	1.2 Determine expansion to other schools. Monitor results. 2.2 Determine expansion to other schools. 3.2 Approve new course of study. Monitor results of curriculum. 4.2 Provide staff or money for supplementary services.

Source: "A Proposed Plan for the Mt. Diablo Individual School Management System." Draft No. 3. Concord, Calif.: Mt. Diablo Unified School District, 1976, p. 19.
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IV . Reactions to Site Management Application

During the latter part of 1976, the Management Techniques Committee of the California Association of School Business Officials (CASBO) solicited written comments about decentralization from CASBO's various research and development committees. The following comments, grouped by operational area, were among those submitted by the committees.

School Budget

The School Budget Research and Development Committee submitted the following comments:

1. A workable definition of decentralization as applied to the school budget process would be: "The delegation of responsibility and accountability for the decision-making process to smaller functional units of program management. Resources are allocated to the units on the basis of established criteria and financial limitations."
2. The following must be present:
 - A set of budget criteria (ratios, allocations, and so forth)
 - The identification of constraints (class size, student/teacher ratios, labor contracts, and so forth)
 - The identification of units (schools, departments, and programs)
 - The identification of resources
 - The allocation of resources to units
 - The submittal, analysis, and acceptance or rejection of exceptional requests
 - A documentation format for unit input
 - The reception and consolidation of unit input into a district budget
 - A method of making accurate and timely status reports
 - A training program for unit administrators (input participation—staff, parents, and the like; exceptional requests; and budget status)
 - The evaluation of unit budget managers by the administration
3. The estimated additional cost for decentralization would range from \$1 per unit of a.d.a. for small districts to less than \$.65 per unit of a.d.a. for large districts.

4. Decentralization would have the following implications for the budget function:

- A training program should be developed for administrators, staff, community members, and others in order that decentralization could be conducted in an organized manner.
- The communications between staff, parents, and the community in general should be improved.
- The competition for resources would increase.
- Costs would increase.
- Decentralization would require increased time and involvement of personnel—perhaps at the cost of less time in other areas.
- Decentralization would enhance the opportunity for evaluation of programs.

Personnel and Employee Relations

The Personnel and Employee Relations Research and Development Committee submitted the following comments:

1. If "decentralization" goes beyond the limited function of educational programs, the decentralized functions should be clearly enunciated.

To delegate authority without concomitant responsibility is a "half a loaf" approach that tends to lessen the responsibility for consequences of actions taken.

A definition of decentralization using the terms *school site* or *school level* would be a narrow definition. *Nearer the point of implementation* would be preferable.

2. In personnel management unique characteristics must be considered:

- An effective classified employee management system incorporates, and is designed for, career employment opportunity.
- Fairness in treatment and uniformity in application of performance standards, which are hallmarks of good personnel management, must be clearly communicated and practiced under a decentralized system.

3. The general constraints would include the following:

- Federal and state laws continue to impose employment and working condition criteria that are becoming more complex and that seriously reduce administrative latitude in the decision-making process.
- Collective bargaining introduces a formalized bilateral agreement or contract covering specific areas of working conditions. The ultimate authority in the collective bargaining process is highly centralized.
- Legal and technical interpretations of laws, rules, code sections, and labor relations processes necessitate a high degree of understanding and competency on the part of managers, thereby requiring continuing training, research, and specialization.
- Compensation and disciplinary actions are examples of personnel management functions that must meet the criteria of fairness and consistency in matters involving the work force.
- School districts operating under a merit system pose a different set of problems pertaining to classified personnel management. The personnel management functions may not supersede or conflict with those vested in the personnel commission.
- Multiple bargaining units may secure a variety of agreements, thus requiring the site manager to have extensive training and orientation in administering contracts for the various categories of employees.

4. The techniques to be used in the decentralization process include the following:

- Carefully weighing and making known the functions that are to be decentralized prior to implementation
- Establishing clear lines of authority *above* the decision-making level
- Insisting on accountability (responsibility) for actions
- Supporting decentralized functions with clearly written procedures
- Keeping technical matters the responsibility of the district office; e.g., employment qualifications, testing, position classification, and salary determination

5. The implications of decentralization would include the following:

- Loss of centralized accountability
- Divergent methods of operation

- Duplication of effort and lack of standardization leading to inefficient use of personnel and material resources
- Improved balance of needs between the operating and district levels
- A critical need for inservice training in complicated personnel matters for site administrators

Philosophically, decentralization has some very appealing aspects; however, the advantages must be carefully weighed against the practical problems to be encountered. Decentralization exists in a variety of models, and increasing pressure to expand this concept can be expected. Poorly orchestrated decentralization can be counterproductive and can result in less education for the dollar.

Accounting

The Accounting Research and Development Committee submitted the following comments:

1. *Decentralization* means a systematic and consistent delegation of decision-making authority, resources, and accountability to the site level.
2. Decentralization should be carried out only to the extent that educational benefits can be clearly shown to outweigh the resulting costs.

Legal requirements must be met, and the district's officials and the governing board must be protected.

Decentralization exists in various degrees. Certain areas within the accounting function could be decentralized to a limited degree. The use of revolving cash funds might be expanded to facilitate the processing of small miscellaneous purchases and claims. Authority and responsibility in this area should be decentralized to some extent.

General accounting, cost accounting, accounts payable, payroll, and attendance reporting are processes that should remain centralized. The accounting and purchasing functions should be strengthened at the district level before any move to decentralization.

3. Accounting personnel should examine carefully the costs associated with the assumption of additional responsibilities in a decentralized program. More detailed financial information will be needed by more administrators than is needed in a centralized system. This need will probably lead to the hiring of additional staff and/or expanded data processing.

sing capabilities. It will also change the roles of many persons in important district-level positions.

4. Business officials will have to make many adjustments. The concept of decentralization has much merit; however, the degree of decentralization has been extended too far in some districts. Decentralization is a fairly new concept in school administration. It is still in the experimental stage.

School Finance

The School Finance Research and Development Committee submitted the following comments:

1. The general constraints of decentralization would include the following:
 - For a school finance function to be effective, those individuals with the authority to make decisions on finance must have a thorough knowledge of the sources of revenues available and the methods that can be used to maximize district resources. The development of such personnel at each school site would be a most time-consuming and costly effort. It would also further remove most site managers from other areas of effectiveness.
 - Most decisions in the area of finance require careful consideration of the entire district's circumstances, not just those of the local site.
 - It is difficult to conceive of a system of rewards for the site-level manager who achieves success in the area of finance. The results of his or her good management cannot be easily measured, nor can the additional resources he or she has generated be allocated to his or her school in a consistent way. There seems to be little incentive for excellence.
 - Typically, site-level managers do not want the additional responsibility inherent in decentralization. Usually, their strengths are not in finance or related areas.
2. The costs involved in decentralizing the school finance function would be prohibitive. The costs would include those for (1) providing the site manager with the knowledge and skills needed for effective decision making; and (2) maintaining his or her level of knowledge in view of the frequent changes that occur in school finance. In addition, some district-level coordination would prob-

ably be required, which would add still more costs.

On the other hand, a concerted effort to make the site-level manager more knowledgeable about the district's finances and to make him or her aware of ways that he or she could contribute to sound financial decision making could be done at a minimal cost. The return on this effort could be quite significant.

3. In general, decentralization of the school finance function would appear to be a costly proposition, one that would likely have no positive benefits for the district.

Transportation

The Transportation Research and Development Committee submitted the following comments:

1. The factors to be considered include the following:
 - Legal aspects—ensuring that all rules and regulations are followed
 - Appropriate use of equipment
 - The economics of centralization vs. decentralization
 - The responsibility for the development of annual reports
 - The responsibility for scheduling buses and people
 - Training and evaluation of people
 - The development and implementation of district policies
2. The potential advantages of decentralization are the following:
 - The management load on the district office could be lessened by giving more decision-making authority to the department heads.
 - Budget authority could be increased within the bounds of law and district policy.
 - Better use could be made of district buses and equipment.
 - Scheduling could be improved.
 - Closer working relations could be established between the budget and purchasing functions.
3. The potential disadvantages of decentralization include the following:
 - Conflicts in accountability could arise between the governing board, the superintendent, central management, and site management.

- Conflicts in personnel negotiations could arise between the governing board and employee organizations.
- Poor utilization of buses, scheduling conflicts, and inadequate and irregular maintenance of equipment could result.
- Conflicts with school programs could arise.
- The legal requirements regarding the operation of a transportation system could be violated.
- The overall costs of the transportation system could increase.

Risk Management

The Risk Management Research and Development Committee submitted the following comments:

1. The major concern about decentralization as it applies to risk management is that programs that have insurance or risk management implications might be initiated or changed without the knowledge of those in the central office. For example, in a moderately decentralized district, two schools initiated a program of flying familiarization as an addition to a course in air transportation. The district was "bare" (unprotected) for over three months for that activity. The coverage cost an additional \$700 per year.
2. Decentralization tends to place the decision-making powers in the hands of persons who are unaware of the broad, more technical or legal implications of risk management. This creates probabilities of unknown liability exposure. Subsequent liability could have a catastrophic impact on the district's fiscal resources.

Building

The Building Research and Development Committee submitted the following comments:

1. Authority and responsibility should be divisible into three categories: district office, school, and shared. Each decision should fall into one of these three categories. The concept of site management requires that decentralization be applied in various degrees across the complete range of resources. In some areas decision making would be a district office function; in other areas the school would have decision-making authority and responsibility; and in some areas decision making would be shared.

Complete decentralization, carried to its logical conclusion of placing all authority at the school level, would result in chaotic and expensive proliferation of "administrators" who lack the technical knowledge to make good decisions, the purchasing volume to effect cost savings, and the strength found in unity to make political changes. The ultimate result of complete decentralization would be the *deunification* of school districts, thereby making each school unit an autonomous district.

The value of local control in certain areas, the value of shared control in other areas, and the wisdom and necessity of central control in still other areas must be recognized. All resources and operations should be analyzed, and the distribution of authority and responsibility should be made on the basis of the three categories previously discussed.

2. The authority and responsibility for the development of the educational program should be shared by the principal, staff, and parents in cooperation with the district office. Those who use a facility will have valuable contributions to make toward ensuring that the facility is, indeed, a "tool for learning." The district office must ensure that the building conforms to regulations, fits into the total district master plan for facilities, and facilitates student achievement of minimum standards as reflected in the district's goals and philosophy.
3. The authority and responsibility for the selection and/or sale of school sites should be shared. Involving a districtwide citizens' committee should help to allay feelings of suspicion that sites for purchase or sale are selected because of hidden motives, personal gain, or just plain incompetence. District office staff should be involved because of their knowledge of overall needs; their technical skills in developing projections; their knowledge of legal requirements; and their ability to centralize efficiently the functions relating to contracts with local and state agencies, appraisers, title companies, county counsel, and property owners.
4. The technical nature of construction, the complexities of State School Building Aid regulations, and financial considerations require that the authority and responsibility for the construction of school facilities be vested in the district office.

Purchasing

The Purchasing Research and Development Committee submitted the following comments:

1. The advantages of centralized purchasing and receiving are the following:

- Specific purchasing responsibilities are assigned to relatively few persons.
- Only *trained* purchasing personnel commit the district to transactions.
- Those involved in purchasing are knowledgeable of the legal facets of public purchasing in California, including Education Code requirements related to purchasing.
- Transactions are carried out by people experienced in writing contractual agreements.
- The purchasing of like items can be standardized.
- Like materials can be purchased in quantity, thus permitting dollar savings.
- The products offered for sale can be analyzed objectively.
- Centralized purchasing provides for a single office through which all vendors or suppliers may contact the district and for centralized warehousing of quantity purchases.
- Centralized purchasing provides for expertise in specification writing.
- All orders obligating district funds can be found in a single location.
- Follow-up on overdue orders can be conducted more effectively.
- A centralized receiving operation provides for delivery at one location in the district.
- A centralized receiving operation permits expeditious receiving of merchandise, checking for discrepancies or damage, and inventorying of materials and equipment.
- Payments can be made quickly and accurately.

- Equipment being picked up for repairs is disbursed from a central location.
- Orders can be placed by means of computer, teletype, or telex operation.
- District guidelines for the acquisition of materials are established at a central location.
- The most economical quantities in which to order materials can be readily determined.
- Damage claims are handled by people with knowledge in that area.
- Fewer pieces of material-handling equipment are needed.
- Equipment requiring special wiring can be checked for compliance with safety codes.
- Items requiring storage in fire-proof vaults can be maintained in such vaults.
- New equipment can be checked for compliance with Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) standards.

2. The disadvantages of centralized purchasing and receiving are the following:

- The acquisition of needed materials can be delayed by the necessity of sending requisitions to a central location.
- Delays in processing requisitions can cause delays in material acquisition.
- The district office may require the use of a standard item rather than that requested by the originating school or department.
- Those who request items have little control over their acquisition.

3. The advantages of decentralized purchasing are as follows:

- The placement of some orders can be done more quickly than it can be in a centralized operation.
- The budget manager (principal, department chairperson, or instructor) can buy what he or she wants.

V. Potential Obstacles and Legal Considerations

This section contains discussions about (1) the transition from concept to implementation of site management; (2) decentralization by proclamation; (3) areas of high specialization and high risk; (4) individual rights and management decisions; and (5) the legal aspects of decentralization.

The Transition from Concept to Implementation

Organized opposition to decentralization is usually negligible during the discussion stage. Reactions begin when a school district tries to make the transition from the discussion stage to actual implementation of the concept. With implementation comes the realization by site managers that responsibility and accountability are commensurate with their new decision-making power and authority.

A survey of one decentralized district with 12 schools revealed that one principal was happy to assume full responsibility and accountability when given the authority to make decisions of a substantial nature. Another principal, however, indicated that he was not at all comfortable in making decisions of a controversial nature or those involving large amounts of money. He was more comfortable when the decisions were made by someone else. The feelings of the other ten principals ranged from thinking that the new process was great to wanting no part of it.

Decentralization by Proclamation

In a few districts, governing boards have decreed that "tomorrow this district will be decentralized." For a district to begin such a new program without extensive planning and preparation is hazardous. To develop a climate of mutual trust, to formulate plans for staff development, and to construct an adequate management information system takes considerable time and effort.

Areas of High Specialization and High Risk

The decentralization of some operational areas might best be considered only after successful decentralization of areas of little specialization and/or risk. Pupil transportation, educational data processing, maintenance, purchasing, warehousing, and facility planning and construction are areas in

which districts should not decentralize without experience in implementing the concept.

Individual Rights and Management Decisions

The legal framework within which school districts operate is an obvious constraint to decentralization. Federal and state laws impose employment and working condition criteria that are increasingly complex and that seriously reduce administrative latitude in the decision-making process.

Legal and technical interpretations of laws, rules, code sections, and labor relations processes require a high degree of understanding and competency on the part of those making such interpretations. This understanding and competency require continuing training, research, and specialization. Decentralization in the area of employer-employee relations would be costly and could seriously detract from the primary site-level administrative function of providing for quality educational programs. As an example, collective bargaining involves a formalized bilateral agreement, or contract, covering specific working conditions. The inherent authority and responsibility for the bargaining process is highly centralized.

Legal Aspects

Education has often been described as a federal interest, a state function, and a local responsibility. Under the constitutional form of government, the role of the individual school has been, and will continue to be, determined within a legal framework.

Two dimensions to the legal aspects of decentralization can be noted: (1) a *traditional* dimension; and (2) an *emerging* dimension. In some cases the two overlap, and in others they conflict.

Traditional dimension. The following are characteristics of the traditional dimension:

1. Distribution of authority—The distribution of authority is direct, in the form of either discretionary powers and duties or ministerial powers and duties. The Legislature sets forth such powers and duties for school districts.
2. Governance—Legislation determines the process for establishing school district governing

boards and establishes the powers and duties of such boards. Legislation also provides for administrative regulations through the State Board of Education (California Administrative Code, Title 5, Education). From an administrative point of view, the State Department of Education deals with the county superintendents of schools and the school districts; and the districts, in turn, deal with the school sites.

3. Finance—The financing of education is done through a system of local tax support and state apportionments, both principal and special. Principal apportionments are determined by means of formulas based upon average daily attendance, assessed valuation of property, and the tax effort within the district. The authority of districts to raise money through their own tax efforts is limited to that granted by the Legislature.
4. Control—The authority for, and the limits of, school control are set down in the Education Code and the California Administrative Code, Title 5, Education. The Education Code has traditionally contained statements as to the

administrative actions *permitted* to school districts.

Emerging dimension. The following are characteristics of the emerging dimension:

1. Distribution of authority—The distribution of authority is less distinct than before. Efforts are being made to redistribute authority within and between jurisdictions.
2. Governance—Governance is less hierarchical and more multidimensional. The state may soon be dealing directly with school sites.
3. Finance—There appears to be an increasing emphasis on entitlements and categorical, or specially targeted, funds, some of which are allocated on the basis of school-site application and participation.
4. Control—Administrative and legislative controls of the education process at the local level are less distinct than before. Recently, the Education Code was changed from a restrictive code to a permissive code. A school district can now take any action that is not prohibited by law, as long as that action is consistent with the purposes for which schools are established.

VI. Pros, Cons, and Constraints

At the California Association of School Business Officials' annual conference in April, 1976, a booklet entitled *What's Right—and What's Wrong with Decentralization* was distributed.¹ The booklet contained a summary of the results of a survey undertaken to determine the effectiveness of decentralization as a management technique in the administration of the public schools. The document defined decentralization as "a systematic and consistent delegation of authority and decision making to the local school level."

The survey was conducted in 39 California school districts that had implemented, to some degree, the concept of decentralization. Questionnaires were sent to the district superintendent; assistant superintendent, business; assistant superintendent, instruction; personnel director; principal; president of the governing board; president of a certificated employees organization; and president of a classified employees organization in each of the 39 districts. Those individuals were asked to render an opinion on given statements, many of which related to those areas of school administration that could most effectively be decentralized.

The areas that the respondents believed should be decentralized were the following (those who did not agree with the majority are indicated in parentheses):

- Budget and fiscal planning
- Accounting
- Personnel, classified and certificated (business officials, personnel directors, and presidents of professional organizations)
- Curriculum development (governing board presidents)
- Counseling and pupil personnel services (superintendents)
- Public relations
- Civic center use of facilities

The areas of administration that the respondents believed should *not* be decentralized were the following (those who did not agree with the majority are indicated in parentheses):

- Transportation (principals)
- Plant maintenance (principals and presidents of professional organizations)
- Custodial services (principals and presidents of professional organizations)
- Grounds maintenance (principals and presidents of professional organizations)
- Equipment maintenance
- Purchasing (principals and presidents of professional organizations)
- Warehousing
- Food services (presidents of professional organizations)
- Data processing

In July, 1975, Dr. James M. Slezak, then Superintendent, Escondido Union Elementary School District and Escondido Union High School District (now Superintendent, Mt. Diablo Unified School District), received a letter from three of his school principals on the subject of participative management. Portions of that letter are reproduced below.

What does Participative Management do for the individual school?

1. Allows for greater flexibility.

Staffing needs—Staffs decide upon needs that are important to them. For example, hiring a resource teacher, reading specialist, music teachers, teacher aides, or buying equipment and supplies.

Budgeting—The school is now permitted to shift between accounts as need is indicated. Principal and staff have a great deal to say about the budget.

Special and innovative programs—Staffs are encouraged to try innovative programs through shared decisions on school budget allocations.

2. Allows school to be different.

Principal and staff rather than the district office may decide which program the school will adopt. The process is a school decision, and the product is of district interest.

For example, some schools in our district use the Developmental Placement program. Others use the SWRL materials. Allowing schools to be different allows for innovation.

3. Allows schools to set their own priorities within goals established by the community.

Some schools will be working on making the school a more desirable place for children to spend

¹ *What's Right—and What's Wrong with Decentralization*. California Association of School Business Officials, 1976.

their day. Others may be strengthening their math program; while others are hiring teacher aides and reading specialists to help strengthen their reading program. Some may hire additional staff to teach music, physical education, science, or math.

4. Allows for no demands—greater staff involvement in budget discussion.

When a staff has direct control over \$100,000, and indirect control over a budget of \$270,000, there has to be input from staff members.

5. Allows schools to make their own decisions about replacement of staff.

Schools have teacher teams that screen prospective teachers. Teachers are allowed to interview for their own teacher aides. Secretaries, clerks, and custodians interview prospective people for openings.

Each school is allowed to work out its own system for replacement of personnel.

How does Participative Management enhance the job of the Principal?

1. It has made the job much more interesting and challenging.

Principals are no longer just reacting to directives sent out by the district office.

Principals are much more sensitive to the needs of the students in their own buildings as well as the needs of the teachers and parent groups.

The management system requires more meaningful communication with staff concerning programs needed for students.

Money is now available for implementation of innovative ideas.

2. The principal in the district is truly the educational leader and manager of his school.

Principal sets the climate for participative management.

Principal encourages others to become excited about their jobs.

The Escondido Participative Management System provides meaningful communication between principal and staff; principal, staff, and parent; student, teacher, and principal.

When staff has a say in what is happening in a building, many become much more involved in decision making. The need for meaningful communication is much greater. It takes time to get input, but the time is well spent.

It isn't all "roses" in a participative management system.

1. Time

Principals must change their style so they can find more time to work with students, staff, and parents in the decision-making process.

Time is required to involve staff, students, and parents in a meaningful discussion and to arrive at a decision. There can be a time lag. The principal needs to consider how much time it will take to reach a decision. The process is much longer than that used when the principal made most of the decisions for the staff.

2. The district office will occasionally want a decision which needs staff-student-parent input. The district needs to be aware of the time factor and the need to give the school lead time (e.g., year-round schools).
3. Need of inservice to understand and properly use computerized budget system. A budget of over \$250,000 takes a lot of "management."
4. There are some that feel the need to know what is going on in the "other" schools. Communication between schools is now limited. Each school is doing its own thing.
5. Staff readiness. Not all staffs are at the same level of sophistication to accept the participative management philosophy. This makes it very difficult for a principal in such a school to enjoy the same success with the system as that enjoyed in a school where the staff is ready and willing to accept the challenge.²

Samuel L. Barrett offered the following views:

Prevocational programs, career development, and similar "general" career and vocational education programs should be available to all students. Therefore, each school site should offer such programs and have maximum flexibility to design programs that best meet the unique needs of its student population. This concept, however, does not preclude the fact that the district may first establish certain educational objectives to be addressed by all schools in the district.

Specialized or technical training programs, on the other hand, must be realistic in light of current or projected labor market needs. There should be strong evidence that graduates of the program will have an opportunity for gainful employment in the occupation for which they have been trained. Planning for such programs must be districtwide and will provide only limited flexibility at the school-site level.

Currently, in California, planning for vocational education is moving in the direction of area or regional planning. The objective is to delineate more clearly the function of each institution (high school, adult school, regional occupational center/program, or community college) and to eliminate unnecessary duplication. Increased emphasis on regionalization will further restrict the flexibility and autonomy of individual school sites—or, for that matter, school districts—at least as they relate to programs designed to prepare for job entry.

²The Escondido "Hidden Valley" Management System, Escondido, Calif.: Escondido Union Elementary School District and Escondido Union High School District, 1975, pp. 71-74.

In a paper presented to the Educational Management and Evaluation Commission in December, 1976, Marilyn R. Bittle of the California Teachers Association made the following observations:

On the surface it would appear that decentralization would give students, parents, and teachers a greater role in the teaching/learning process—that process which *should* be the focus of *all* who are in any way involved in education.

But before we find ourselves in another well-meaning program which didn't work because those who designed the vehicle hadn't driven one lately, there are some questions we must have answered first.

What about teacher rights?

1. Are all teachers handled in the same manner as far as personnel matters?
2. Is there individual policy for each building that will affect transfer, evaluation, leaves, etc.?
3. Will this require negotiation in each building?
4. Will school situations conflict with bargained contracts?

What process for decision making?

1. To what degree will teachers be really involved in decision making or will they spend hours in meetings and then have the principal make the decision after they leave?
2. Will each building have its own curriculum committees at all levels and in all areas?
3. Will adequate time be given for decision making, or will teachers be asked to attend meetings *after* a full day of teaching? (The kind of creative decision making you get from me at five o'clock on a warm fall afternoon is not the quality you want to improve the educational system.)

In order to satisfy the needs of students and teachers, any system of public school management must include the following ingredients:

1. It must minimize the time spent in paper work, reports, and general clerical tasks.
2. It must maximize the actual time and energy spent by individual teachers working with individual students.
3. It must decrease the number of nonteaching personnel so that teacher-pupil contact can be enhanced.
4. It must clearly establish that the ultimate goal of every person and every program within the education system is teaching and learning. All allocations of monies and personnel which do not demonstrably contribute to that process must be eliminated.

On behalf of the California Teachers Association I urge you to use these criteria in judging the merits of *any* decision-making process, whether it be centralized, decentralized, or "other."

In his presentation to the Management and Evaluation Commission, Joseph M. Brooks,

Executive Secretary, California School Boards Association, said:

It would appear that sufficient potential benefits exist from a program of management decentralization in the public schools that the inauguration of such programs should be encouraged. However, sufficient restraint should be maintained in the implementation program to insure that the apparent benefits of a centralized management operation relating to accountability, professional review, and proper interface of site programs with district and state programs are maintained.

Mr. Brooks also recommended the following:

1. Budget and expenditure decentralization: Increased budget authority should be granted to the site level personnel. Final site budgets should be screened by a central management budget team to ensure proper alignment with district resources, compliance with state and federal laws, and other budget input The central management budget team should possess the necessary authority to make the necessary line item adjustments.
2. Evaluation of personnel at the site level should be advisory in nature: The local administrator and site committee should submit reports on personnel that apparently need assistance in their personnel relations and in their instructional program. These identified staff members should be given assistance under district procedures developed in compliance with the Stull Act.

Hiring under criteria reviewed and approved by a central management team could be transferred to the site level. Review of potential staff candidates selected at the site level by a central management team might well be advisable in the early stages of implementation.

Firing should presently remain a centralized function. Criteria for consideration for firing could be developed at the site level for use by the appropriate central authority.

3. All courses and curriculum offerings established at the site level should be reviewed by a central management team to ensure proper interface with district and interdistrict educational objectives and to ensure compliance with the state and federal laws.
4. Evaluation of pupil performance should remain a split function between the site and central management levels. At the site level it should take the form of intensive parent and teacher conferences. At the district level it should be approached through testing programs that attempt to measure the site and district educational goals and objectives.
5. The allocation of an annual report to the site level would appear to present no major management problems. The district may wish to reserve the right to publish an annual district report.

VII. Examples of Site Management Implementation Outside California

Included below are descriptions of site management implementation efforts made in Louisville, Kentucky; Florida; New York City; and Tacoma, Washington.

Louisville, Kentucky

In June, 1976, the Educational Management and Evaluation Commission heard testimony from Newman M. Walker, Superintendent, Palo Alto City Unified School District, and former superintendent of the Louisville, Kentucky, school district. Dr. Walker discussed his experience in Louisville, where considerable decentralization was effected in the early 1970s.

The efforts in Louisville were motivated partly by a need to revitalize, through greater community involvement, a school system that was falling victim to typical inner city ills as more affluent citizens moved to the suburbs and left behind increasingly segregated schools. The move to decentralization was more political than administrative. Community involvement increased significantly through 138 citizen advisory committees elected for one-year terms on a neighborhood-school basis. The attitudes and skills of individual school principals became very important. Some evaluation of the effort was done by federal evaluators. Although changes in community attitudes were obvious, test scores were not significantly different.

Florida

In Florida, experiments have been conducted with various forms of decentralization. The following is a summary of the basic issues and the recommendations made by the Governor's Citizens' Committee on Education.

School Site Management

The primary problem identified in the area of daily operations at the school site was that central administrative offices and school boards were not responsive to the needs of individual schools or their interests.

The Governor's Citizens' Committee on Education made the following recommendations for solving the problem:

- Instruction and program decision making should be centralized, with participation by parents, faculty, and administrators.
- The organization of instruction should be school centered to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of program delivery.
- The site principal or administrator should have autonomy in developing programs and delivery systems.

Personnel Policies

The primary problem identified in the area of personnel policies was that, in hiring by the central administration, the emphasis is on overall district needs rather than on individual school needs.

The Governor's Citizens' Committee on Education made the following recommendations for solving the problem:

- Staff should be shared on the basis of instructional needs and availability of funds, with decisions made by cooperating administration.
- Staff should be traded off between schools to meet instructional program needs.
- The hiring for the school site should be done by parents and principals.
- The hiring of principals should be done by the community.
- The evaluation of staff should be done by the community to achieve performance accountability.

Legal Authority

The primary problem identified in the area of legal authority was that many schools found that their decision-making power was not based upon law or legislation and could, therefore, be reversed by the courts. Many school boards and central offices faced similar problems when making decisions to decentralize.

The Governor's Citizens' Committee on Education made the following recommendations for solving the problem:

- The State Legislature must set policy and define decentralization parameters for school districts.

- The State Department of Education must develop school-centered, rather than district-centered, programs that include flexibility of instruction, fiscal independence, autonomous personnel control, and community control at the school site.

Budgeting and Finance

The primary problem identified in the area of budgeting and finance was that the basic budget authority rests with the State Legislature, the State Board of Education, and the local governing boards, with little power placed in the hands of the local school community or school principal.

The Governor's Citizens' Committee on Education made the following recommendations for solving the problem:

- State aid should be provided directly to individual schools on the basis of individual programs rather than formulas, such as that for average daily attendance.
- The accounting of income should be on a school-by-school basis, and expenditures should be based on individual school needs.
- Program budgeting should be done by the schools; the use of funds for personnel or programs should be at the discretion of the schools.

Community Involvement

The primary problem identified in the area of community involvement was that the school board or central administration is too far removed from the influence of individual parents or groups of parents representing individual schools. Parents desired a greater role in the education decision-making process.

The Governor's Citizens' Committee on Education made the following recommendations for solving the problem:

- Parent advisory councils consisting only of parents with children in the school should be established.
- The parent advisory councils should participate in the selection of school-site administrators, with the final decision being made by the district governing board.
- Annual reports on school and school staff performance should be compiled.
- District administrators and site administrators should be active participants on the parent advisory councils.

New York City

New York City turned to decentralization as a means of increasing the amount of state financial aid for its public schools. Decentralization resulted in the creation of multiple school districts and in this way made public education in the city eligible for increased funding from the state.

In New York the success of decentralized public schools was found to be dependent on four criteria: (1) schools must be accountable to the local community, and students must be provided specific learning objectives; (2) the responsibility for learning must be on the teacher rather than on the learner; (3) education must be intellectually, socially, and emotionally relevant to the learner; and (4) economic and ethnic integration are necessary to education.

The emphasis in New York is on increased decision making at the community/school level. However, the decision-making process is inhibited by the lack of legal authority for decentralization and the tight fiscal control exercised over the schools and school districts by both the Legislature and political leaders.

Tacoma, Washington

In Tacoma, Washington, decentralized budgeting has been utilized as a means of providing for increased community control and decision-making. Tacoma was faced with a need for an additional \$22 million to support its schools. The method used to build the budget "from the bottom up," from the school level to the district level, was credited as being a major factor in the passage of the necessary tax levy.

The Tacoma process involved creating a community group made up of parents, interested influential citizens, teachers, and administrators to negotiate school needs, define objectives, and set individual realistic school budgets in accordance with the stated needs. The tax increase proposal was subsequently supported by a fact-gathering citizens' committee. The major direction related to programs and instruction still emanates from the central office, however, with some community input.

The major premise in Tacoma is that the operation of a large school system is much too complex to allow enforcement of decisions from the top down. Tacoma personnel also assert that building the budget on the basis of available revenues from the school level up to the district level is more productive than building it from the top down.

Appendix A. Example of District Goals

The following district goals were adopted by the Mt. Diablo Unified School District governing board in 1972.

The purpose of the educational program in the Mt. Diablo Unified School District is to help children to develop intellectually, socially, emotionally, and physically.

We believe that education has responsibility to the individual and to society.

We believe that responsibility to the individual may best be realized when the educational program provides for:

- a. Development of the basic skills of communication and computation.
- b. Development of basic skills in good human relationships.
- c. Opportunities for the student to make choices, to think critically, to experience success, to deal with failure constructively, and to respect and respond to the principle of constituted authority.
- d. Developing a sense of personal worth coupled with self-discipline and governed by a code of moral and ethical values.
- e. Developing an understanding of the importance of physical and mental health.
- f. Opportunities in vocational education and training and in career education.
- g. Development of interest and participation in recreation and leisure-time activities.
- h. Experiences that encourage appreciation of and/or participation in the creative and fine arts and other areas of the humanities.
- i. Development of interest in life-long learning and preparation for continued education.

We believe that responsibility to society may best be realized when the educational program provides for:

- a. Knowledge, appreciation, and understanding of the American heritage and development of a desire to

participate in local, national, and world affairs.

- b. Knowledge, appreciation, and understanding of the democratic form of government, the history of the United States, and the Constitution of the United States.
- c. Knowledge and understanding of various governments, societies, and ideologies along with their impact on human existence.
- d. An understanding of scientific principles as related to human development and the impact of technology on man and his environment.
- e. An understanding of the contributions of the humanities to the development of social institutions and mores.
- f. Development of a wholesome attitude toward the family and a willingness to accept responsibilities in the family as a significant unit in our society.
- g. Development of respect for and understanding of the rights, privileges, and contributions of all individuals, groups, and peoples.
- h. Development of skills and attitudes which enable the individual to cope with change and conflict in our society and to become an independent productive member of society.

We believe that these purposes can best be achieved when the educational program:

- a. Is adjusted insofar as possible in degree and scope to the intellectual, emotional, and physical capacities of the individual students.
- b. Is related to the student's past experience and future goals.
- c. Is provided in an atmosphere of kindness, sensitivity, and mutual respect.

Appendix B. Decentralized or Partially Decentralized Districts

The following school districts have been identified by the California Association of School Business Officials and/or the California State Department of Education's School District Management Assistance Team as having implemented, to some degree, one or more concepts of a decentralized management plan. An asterisk preceding the name of a district indicates that the principals in that district have moderate to substantial latitude in decision making. The number given in parentheses after each entry is the enrollment figure for the district as shown in the *1977 California Public School Directory* (Sacramento: California State Department of Education, 1977).

Alameda County

- *Berkeley Unified, 1414 Walnut Street, Berkeley, CA 94709 (14,990)
- Fremont Unified, 40775 Fremont Boulevard, Fremont, CA 94538 (31,407)
- Livermore Valley Joint Unified, 685 Las Positas Boulevard, Livermore, CA 94550 (14,551)
- Oakland Unified, 1025 Second Avenue, Oakland, CA 94606 (53,315)

Contra Costa County

- *Mt. Diablo Unified, 1936 Carlotta Drive, Concord, CA 94519 (42,894)
- *San Ramon Valley Unified, 699 Old Orchard Drive, Danville, CA 94526 (12,367)

Fresno County

- Fresno Unified, Education Center, Tulare and M Streets, Fresno, CA 93721 (54,749)

Humboldt County

- Eureka City Elementary/Eureka City High, 3200 Walford Avenue, Eureka, CA 95501 (9,439)

Los Angeles County

- ABC Unified, 16700 South Norwalk Boulevard, Cerritos, CA 90701 (38,554)
- Lancaster Elementary, 44711 North Cedar Avenue, P.O. Box 1750, Lancaster, CA 93534 (6,699)
- Lawndale Elementary, 4161 West 147th Street, Lawndale, CA 90260 (4,782)
- Long Beach Unified, 701 Locust Avenue, Long Beach, CA 90813 (57,815)
- Los Angeles Unified, 450 North Grand Avenue, P.O. Box 3307, Terminal Annex, Los Angeles, CA 90051 (740,586)
- Norwalk-La Mirada Unified, 12820 South Pioneer Boulevard, Norwalk, CA 90650 (24,074)
- Redondo Beach City Elementary, 1401 Inglewood Avenue, Redondo Beach, CA 90278 (6,855)
- *Rowland Unified, 1830 Nogales Street, Rowland Heights, CA 91748 (16,217)
- Sulphur Springs Union Elementary, 18830 Soledad Canyon Road, Canyon Country, CA 91351 (2,256)
- Walnut Valley Unified, 476 South Lemon Road, Walnut, CA 91789 (6,338)
- Whittier Union High, 12102 East Washington Boulevard, Whittier, CA 90606 (18,846)

Orange County

- Centralia Elementary, 6625 La Palma Avenue, Buena Park, CA 90620 (5,750)
- *Cypress Elementary, 9470 Moody Street, Cypress, CA 90630 (5,910)
- Fountain Valley Elementary, Number One Lighthouse Lane, Fountain Valley, CA 92708 (11,448)

- Fullerton Elementary, 1401 West Valencia Drive, Fullerton, CA 92633 (11,261)
 Garden Grove Unified, 10331 Stanford Avenue, Garden Grove, CA 92640 (47,475)
 *Huntington Beach Union High, 5201 Bolsa, Huntington Beach, CA 92647 (29,160)
 Irvine Unified, 2941 Alton Avenue, P.O. Box 19535, Irvine, CA 92664 (10,670)
 Laguna Beach Unified, 550 Blumont Street, Laguna Beach, CA 92651 (3,151)
 *Newport-Mesa Unified, 1601 16th Street, P.O. Box 1368, Newport Beach, CA 92663 (25,211)
 Ocean View Elementary, 7972 Warner Avenue, Huntington Beach, CA 92647 (13,970)
 Placentia Unified, 1301 East Orangethorpe Avenue, Placentia, CA 92670 (17,664)
 Santa Ana Unified, 1405 French Street, Santa Ana, CA 92701 (27,138)
 Westminster Elementary, 14121 Cedarwood Avenue, Westminster, CA 92683 (10,116)

Riverside County

- San Jacinto Unified, 600 East Main, San Jacinto, CA 92383 (1,877)

Sacramento County

- *Folsom-Cordova Unified, 1091 Coloma Street, Folsom, CA 95630 (11,800)

San Bernardino County

- Chaffey Joint Union High, 211 West Fifth Street, Ontario, CA 91762 (12,703)
 Colton Joint Unified, 1212 Valencia Drive, Colton, CA 92324 (10,281)
 Ontario-Montclair Elementary, 950 West D Street, P.O. Box 313, Ontario, CA 91761 (15,188)
 San Bernardino City Unified, 799 F Street, San Bernardino, CA 92410 (31,850)
 Upland Elementary, 904 West Ninth Street, P.O. Box 1239, Upland, CA 91786 (5,799)
 Yucaipa Joint Unified, 12592 California Street, Yucaipa, CA 92399 (4,440)

San Diego County

- *Escondido Union Elementary, 980 North Ash Street, Escondido, CA 92027 (9,519)
 La Mesa-Spring Valley Elementary, 4750 Date Avenue, La Mesa, CA 92041 (13,312)
 San Diego City Unified, 4100 Normal Street, San Diego, CA 92103 (122,213)

Santa Barbara County

- *Goleta Union Elementary, 5689 Hollister Avenue, Goleta, CA 93017 (6,165)

Santa Clara County

- Alum Rock Union Elementary, 2930 Gay Avenue, San Jose, CA 95127 (14,370)
 Cupertino Union Elementary, 10301 Vista Drive, Cupertino, CA 95014 (18,362)
 *Fremont Union High, Box F, Sunnyvale, CA 94087 (14,317)
 Gilroy Unified, 7663 Church Street, Gilroy, CA 95020 (5,734)
 Los Gatos Joint Union High, 809 University Avenue, P.O. Box 1257, Los Gatos, CA 95030 (4,549)
 Palo Alto City Unified, 25 Churchill Avenue, Palo Alto, CA 94306 (12,637)
 San Jose Unified, 1605 Park Avenue, San Jose, CA 95126 (37,690)
 Santa Clara Unified, 1889 Lawrence Road, P.O. Box 397, Santa Clara, CA 95052 (19,537)

Santa Cruz County

- *Soquel Union Elementary, 620 Monterey Avenue, Capitola, CA 95010 (2,020)

Solano County

*Fairfield-Suisun Unified, 1025 Delaware Street, Fairfield, CA 94533 (12,015)

Vacaville Unified, 751 School Street, Vacaville, CA 95688 (7,752)

Vallejo City Unified, 211 Valle Vista, Vallejo, CA 94590 (14,543)

Tulare County

Lindsay Unified, 519 East Honolulu, Lindsay, CA 93247 (2,223)

Ventura County

Conejo Valley Unified, 1400 East Janss Road, Thousand Oaks, CA 91360 (19,748)

Fillmore Unified, 627 Sespe Avenue, P.O. Box 697, Fillmore, CA 93015 (2,876)

Simi Valley Unified, 875 East Cochran, Simi Valley, CA 93065 (24,397)

Yolo County

Woodland Joint Unified, 175 Walnut Street, Woodland, CA 95695 (7,480)

Appendix C. Practitioners Who Participated in the Study

The persons listed below testified before or submitted reports to the Educational Management and Evaluation Commission and have consented to the placement of their names in this publication as consultants available to school and district personnel to discuss decentralization and site management issues.

- Samuel L. Bayrett, State Director of Vocational Education, California State Department of Education, 721 Capitol Mall, Sacramento, CA 95814
- Marilyn Russell Bittle, Teacher, California Teachers Association, 141 Syracuse Walk, Long Beach, CA 90803
- Donald R. Brand, Principal, Saratoga High School, P.O. Box 68, Saratoga, CA 95070
- Joseph M. Brooks, Special Consultant to the President, California School Boards Association, 800 9th Street, Suite 201, Sacramento, CA 95814
- Robert E. Burroughs, Principal, Greentree Elementary School, 4200 Manzanita, Irvine, CA 92714
- Werner J. Carlson, Principal, Charles W. TeWinkle Middle School, 3224 California Avenue, Costa Mesa, CA 92626
- Lawrence Carr, Principal, H. Glenn Richardson Elementary School, 1069 Meadowlark Drive, Fairfield, CA 94533
- H. Glenn Davis, Associate Superintendent for Elementary Education Programs, California State Department of Education, 721 Capitol Mall, Sacramento, CA 95814
- Helen E. Ditte, Past President, Board of Trustees, Huntington Beach Union High School District, 5201 Bolsa Avenue, Huntington Beach, CA 92647
- Glen H. Dysinger, Assistant Superintendent, Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Huntington Beach Union High School District, 5201 Bolsa Avenue, Huntington Beach, CA 92647
- George Fernandez, Principal, Cupertino High School, 10100 Finch Avenue, Cupertino, CA 95014
- Rex C. Fortune, Associate Superintendent for Secondary Education Programs, California State Department of Education, 721 Capitol Mall, Sacramento, CA 95814
- E. T. Giugni, Superintendent, Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District, 1025 Delaware Street, Fairfield, CA 94533
- James Q. Gorman, Director, Classified Personnel, San Juan Unified School District, 3738 Walnut Avenue, Carmichael, CA 95608
- Charles A. Hess, Assistant Superintendent, Business Services, Huntington Beach Union High School District, 5201 Bolsa Avenue, Huntington Beach, CA 92647
- John Mattson, Principal, Rincon Intermediate School, 2800 East Hollingworth Street, West Covina, CA 91790
- John L. Miles, Jr., Assistant Superintendent, Business Services, Temple City Unified School District, 9516 East Longdon Avenue, Temple City, CA 91780
- Stanley G. Oswalt, Superintendent, Rowland Unified School District, 1830 Nogales Street, Rowland Heights, CA 91748
- Wanda L. Purdy, Director, Internal Business Management, Office of the Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools, 9300 East Imperial Highway, Downey, CA 90242
- James F. Regan, Superintendent, Los Gatos Joint Union High School District, 809 University Avenue, P.O. Box 1257, Los Gatos, CA 95030
- Howard Roop, Assistant Superintendent, Instructional Services, Huntington Beach Union High School District, 5201 Bolsa Avenue, Huntington Beach, CA 92647
- Jack S. Roper, Superintendent, Fremont Union High School District, P.O. Box F, Sunnyvale, CA 94087

James M. Slezak, Superintendent, Mt. Diablo Unified School District, 1936 Carlotta Drive, Concord, CA 94519

Clarke R. Stone, Associate Superintendent, Personnel, Santa Ana Unified School District, 1405 French Street, Santa Ana, CA 92701

Jim Treanor, Director of Research, California School Employees Association, P.O. Box 640, San Jose, CA 95106

David T. Ulan, Administrator, Office of Special Education, California State Department of Education, 721 Capitol Mall, Sacramento, CA 95814

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